



UNITED STATES SENATE
**REPUBLICAN
POLICY COMMITTEE**

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The Bush Administration Has Answered the Call

Iraq Resolution: The Road Well Traveled

On October 2, President Bush, joined by Senator Lott and Representatives Hastert and Gephardt, announced that an agreement had been reached on a resolution authorizing the use of military force against Iraq. Introduced in the Senate as S.J. Res. 46 and in the House as H.J. Res. 114, this announcement marked the culmination of more than two weeks of negotiations between the White House and Congress on a resolution first requested by the President on September 19.

Charges have been leveled that the timing of the President's request for a resolution may have been politically motivated, an effort to shift focus away from a weak economy and other domestic issues. A review of the record suggests just the opposite. The Administration has shown remarkable consistency in its approach to Iraq, making it a focal point of its foreign policy since assuming office. On the other hand, it appears that many Congressional Democrats have changed their tune, first calling on President Bush to consult Congress and make the case against Iraq, then complaining when he followed through on their advice. A brief time-line of the President's actions and the various Democrat demands follows:

- **February 2001** – **Secretary of State Colin Powell** visits the Middle East in an attempt to garner regional support for the “smart sanctions” plan – the overhaul of United Nations sanctions against Iraq in favor of stronger measures to curtail Saddam Hussein's oil smuggling and military purchases. At various points, Russia, China, and France impede these efforts until a deal is tentatively reached late March 2002. The **U.N. Security Council** finally adopts features of the smart sanctions program on May 14, 2002.
- **September 18, 2001** – **President Bush** signs into law S.J. Res. 23, the “Authorization for Use of Military Force,” authorizing the President to use force against those responsible for the terrorist attacks of 9/11 and those who aided or harbored the terrorists, and to take appropriate action to deter and prevent future terrorist attacks against the United States.
- **October 10, 2001** – Czech officials report that **9/11 terrorist Mohammed Atta** met with an Iraqi intelligence officer in Prague early in 2001. Although no evidence exists to suggest this was directly related to 9/11, the meeting serves to highlight Iraqi dealings with members of al Qaeda.

- **November 19, 2001** – The **Bush Administration** identifies six countries it suspects are developing biological weapons: Iraq, North Korea, Libya, Syria, Iran, and Sudan. “We do not need the events of September 11 to tell us that [Saddam Hussein] is a very dangerous man who is a threat to his own people, a threat to the region, and a threat to us because he is determined to acquire weapons of mass destruction,” said National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice [FoxNews Sunday].
- **November 26, 2001** – **President Bush** calls for renewed weapons inspections in Iraq. During a Rose Garden ceremony, he said: “My message is, if you harbor a terrorist, you’re a terrorist. If you feed a terrorist, you’re a terrorist. If you develop weapons of mass destruction that you want to (use to) terrorize the world, you’ll be held accountable.” The President also stated: “As for Mr. Saddam Hussein, he needs to let inspectors back into his country to show us that he is not developing weapons of mass destruction.”
- **January 24, 2002** – **President Bush** continues to contemplate military action against Iraq. “The President stands strong and firm in his insistence that Saddam Hussein live up to the agreements that he himself made, that he committed his country to protect peace and stability in the region,” said spokesman Ari Fleischer in his daily press conference.
- **January 29, 2002** – **President Bush** in his State of the Union speech recognizes Iraq as part of an “axis of evil” that includes Iran and North Korea. He also states, “I will not wait on events, while dangers gather. I will not stand by, as peril draws closer and closer. The United States of America will not permit the world’s most dangerous regimes to threaten us with the world’s most destructive weapons.”
- **February 11, 2002** – **Senator Lieberman** weighs in on action against Iraq: “We know that he has the means or the motivation to do us harm,” he said. “We know that he has weapons, chemical and biological weapons. We have reason to believe he is developing nuclear weapons” [Fox News].
- **February 13, 2002** – **Senator Byrd** calls on the President to consult Congress before expanding war on terrorism: “The President would do well to obtain the support of the people’s elected representatives in Congress before undertaking endeavors which may claim the lives of our Nation’s sons and daughters. The Constitution declares the President to be the Commander in Chief, but it is Congress that has the constitutional authority to raise and support armies, to provide and maintain a navy, and to declare war” [Senate Floor Speech].
- **April 10, 2002** – **Senator Daschle**, responding to questions following a speech before the American Society of Newspaper Editors, defends the Administration approach on Iraq: “Let me say, first, with regard to Iraq, I think the administration may take issue with a description of their position as favoring an invasion of Iraq with troops at this point. I think what the president said is he’s keeping all of his options open and that is exactly what we should do at this point.”

Also on April 10, **Senator Akaka** highlights the threat of Iraqi missile development and presses the case for international involvement: “President Bush is right to continue to make Iraq an issue for the international community. We will need international support if we are going to have an effective strategy for eliminating Saddam Hussein as a threat to world peace” [Senate Floor Speech].

- **June 5, 2002 – Representative Gephardt** publicly backs use of force against Iraq: “New foreign policy initiatives can help remove one of the legs of Saddam’s survival by reducing the desperation of many in the Arab world who see him as a defiant ray of hope. At the same time, we should be prepared to remove the other leg with the use of force” [speech before Council on Foreign Relations].
- **June 10, 2002 – Senator Feingold** calls on President to consult with Congress before acting against Iraq: “My conclusion, then, is that absent a clear finding that Iraq participated in, aided or otherwise provided support for those who attacked the United States on Sept 11, the Constitution requires the President – it requires the President – to seek additional authorization before he can embark on a major new military undertaking in Iraq” [Senate Floor Speech].
- **July 18, 2002 – Senators Specter and Harkin** introduce S.J. Res. 41, a resolution calling for Congress to consider and vote on a resolution authorizing the use of force by the United States Armed Forces against Iraq before such force is deployed. **Senators Feingold and Leahy** cosponsor.
- **July 25, 2002 – Senator Feingold** renews call for Congressional consultation on Iraq: “I am concerned with the dangers posed by Saddam Hussein, as well as with the humanitarian situation in Iraq. But I am also very concerned about the constitutional issues at stake here. This may well be one of our last opportunities to preserve the constitutionally mandated role of Congress in making decisions about war and peace” [Senate Floor Speech].
- **July 30, 2002 – Senators Feinstein and Leahy** introduce S.Con.Res. 133, expressing the sense of Congress that the United States should not use force against Iraq, outside of the existing Rules of Engagement, without specific statutory authorization or a declaration of war under Article I, Section 8, Clause 11 of the Constitution of the United States.
- **July 31, 2002 – Senator Biden** holds a hearing on Iraq in the Foreign Relations Committee. In his opening remarks, the chairman said: “If we expect the American people to support their government over the long haul when it makes a difficult decision, if the possibility exists that we may ask hundreds of thousands of our young men and women in uniform to put themselves in harm’s way, if it is the consensus or a decision reached by the administration that thousands or

tens of thousands of troops would be required to remain behind for an extended period of time, if those measures are required, then we must gain, in my view, the informed consent of the American people.”

Also on July 31, **Senator Daschle**, responding to reporter’s question on Iraq, said: “I would also say that I think it would be a big mistake for the administration to act without Congress and without its involvement. I think there has to be a debate, there has to be some good discussion, there has to be some opportunity for the people to be heard. And so you can find reasons not to provide that opportunity, but I think it would be a big mistake” [Press Conference].

- **August 6, 2002 – President Bush** continues to review military options against Iraq with top military brass and key advisors but reiterates there is no timetable for deciding on a strike and does not commit to military action.
- **September 4, 2002 – President Bush** states that he will consult with Congress before attacking Iraq.
- **September 12, 2002 – President Bush** addresses the **United Nations**, outlines Iraqi violations of existing U.N. resolutions and calls on Security Council for stronger resolution: “We will work with the U.N. Security Council for the necessary resolutions, but the purposes of the United States should not be doubted. The Security Council resolutions will be enforced. The just demands of peace and security must be met or action will be unavoidable and a regime that has lost its legitimacy will also lose its power.”
- **September 19, 2002 – President Bush** asks **Congress** for authorization to use force against Iraq and circulates the first draft resolution to this effect, the “Further Resolution on Iraq” (the text of S.J. Res. 45).
- **September 26, 2002 – Senator Leahy** calls for bipartisanship on Iraq resolution: “The President has sent to Congress a proposed resolution for the use of military force against Iraq. . . . While I hope this is the beginning of a consultative, bipartisan process to produce a sensible resolution and to act on it at the appropriate time, the current proposal is an extraordinarily over-broad, open-ended resolution that would authorize the President to send American troops not only into war against Iraq, but also against any nation in the Gulf or Middle East region, however one defines it” [Senate Floor Speech].

Later on September 26, the **White House** releases a second draft resolution on Iraq, the “Authorization for the Use of Military Force Against Iraq.”

- **October 2, 2002** – The **White House** and **Congressional leaders**, minus Daschle, announce that an agreement has been reached on an Iraq resolution. The White House releases a draft of the agreement, an amended version of the September 26 draft resolution, “Authorization for the Use of Military Force Against Iraq.” The language is introduced in the Senate as S.J. Res. 46 with primary sponsors **Lieberman, Warner, McCain, and Bayh**.
- **October 7, 2002** – **President Bush** takes his case to the American people and reiterates that war is not the first option: “I have asked Congress to authorize the use of America’s military, if it proves necessary, to enforce U.N. Security Council demands. Approving this resolution does not mean that military action is imminent or unavoidable. The resolution will tell the United Nations, and all nations, that America speaks with one voice and is determined to make the demands of the civilized world mean something. Congress will also be sending a message to the dictator in Iraq: that his only chance – his only choice – is full compliance, and the time remaining for that choice is limited.”

Senator Byrd, Representative McDermott and others have drawn parallels to the current debate and that which occurred during consideration of the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution (or the Southeast Asia Resolution). President Johnson asked Congress for that resolution on August 5, 1964. He did not first negotiate a settlement nor did he seek approval from the United Nations before taking military action. An argument can be made that his actions were hasty, the details released were murky, and the maneuverings were secretive to a large degree. Congress approved the resolution on August 7, 1964.

President Bush, by contrast, has sought to negotiate tougher United Nations sanctions against Iraq since first taking office. He has facilitated open, public debate during the course of the last year and continued to prompt the U.N. Security Council into action. Perhaps more importantly, the President has heeded the calls of Democrats and Republicans to seek Congressional approval before acting and has negotiated a bipartisan agreement on an Iraq resolution. Yet, after undertaking all of these efforts, the President has remained insistent that war is the last resort, not the first. And still, there are Democrats who insist we need more time to debate this matter. How many more of their calls must be answered before the final vote is counted?

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